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LETTER DATED 4 OCTOBER 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I should like to bring to your attention the conclusions reached by specialized groups at the University of Baghdad and other scientific institutions regarding the adverse effects on the health of Iraqi citizens which became apparent after the aggression against Iraq that began on 4 January 1991 and which were caused by the use by some of the States belonging to the coalition of uranium-based chemical poisons as well as of depleted uranium for the first time in the history of war.

The principal effects of the use of chemical poisons and depleted uranium are as follows:

1. The appearance of contagious diseases, which have increased by more than 200 per cent, as well as of a hitherto unknown disease that cannot be diagnosed and includes among its symptoms blurred vision in one eye, loss of peripheral vision, severe migraine headaches and swelling of the hands and fingertips. These symptoms first appeared six months after the end of the war;

2. The appearance of cases of juvenile diabetes;

3. An increase in the incidence of cancer, including infantile and juvenile leukaemia;

4. The appearance of cases of birth defects and congenital illnesses in newborns, together with associated diseases;

5. An increase in cases of unexplained sterility in both sexes, attributable, at least in part, to the psychological, radiological and biological effects of the aggression, shelling and noise;

6. A major increase in the number of miscarriages, premature births, stillbirths and difficult deliveries.

In this connection, we would remind you that the coalition armies left approximately 40 tons of depleted uranium in southern Iraq, spread over the battlefields, which have seriously contaminated the air, water, soil and food

chain, as noted in a March 1993 report entitled "Uranium battlefield, home and abroad (depleted uranium used by the U.S. Department of Defense)", by Grace Bukowski and others, and in an article by Eric Hoskins published in The New York Times of 21 January 1993, entitled "U.S. uranium shells used in the Gulf War may be killing Iraqi children".

Furthermore, a report prepared by German doctors states that a strange illness which causes abdominal inflammation is affecting children; this illness is partly attributable to the effects of depleted uranium missiles used by the coalition forces during their aggression against Iraq in 1991.

The embargo on foodstuffs and medicines has also led to the appearance of cases of malnutrition and acute anaemia, which has directly or indirectly affected the health of children, women and the elderly, leading in turn to an increase in mortality attributable to these social causes.

These violations can be considered war crimes, since they contravene the laws and practices of war; accordingly, States and individuals can be held responsible for them.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative